

ALL ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM

===== *By* =====

C H A R L E S L. B R O O K S

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER	7
I. THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS	15
II. APOSTOLIC PRACTICE	26
III. THE PRACTICE OF THE FATHERS	41
IV. UNDER THE GREAT COMMISSION	58

ALL ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

THE PLACE OF THE CHILD IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE right of children to baptism naturally takes its place in a spiritual interpretation of Christianity, as indicating the emphasis which the New Testament lays on the place of the child in the kingdom of God.

Methodism teaches that all children are redeemed by Christ and are, therefore, entitled to baptism; and the baptism of children lays on the Church and the parents the duty of seeing that the children are brought up in the bosom of the Church and under the influence of Christian instruction.

The worst features in connection with the denial of the right of the child to baptism are the doctrine of total depravity out of which it arises and the neglect of the religious education of the child to which it leads. A preacher of another denomination was heard to say that, in order that his own children might be properly instructed in the fundamental truths of the gospel, he kept in his home a black-board on which he had texts of Scripture written, and that there was one passage which he kept ever before their eyes—namely, “Ye are of your father the devil.” Possibly few go to that extreme. But was he not right, if that is what he believed? Ought not the truth to be taught? We, on the contrary, believe that, by right of redemption, our children belong to

God. In baptism we recognize this and assume publicly and solemnly our God-given duty to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The doctrine of "total depravity" has not been able to find itself at home in our Methodist theology. It may be defined as meaning that "all man's powers have come under the influence of sin," or that "no man is able of himself and without the assistance of the Holy Spirit to come to God and continue in the Christian life"; and if this is what is meant by "total depravity," no one could reasonably object to the phrase. But that is not what the words originally meant; they originally meant exactly what they say. The phrase is at home, therefore, only in an ultra-Calvinistic system. It ought to be dropped from Methodist usage. Even our most conservative theologians have seen this. Richard Watson, for instance, is careful to say: "In consequence of the atonement of Christ offered to all, the Holy Spirit is administered to all. The virtues of the unregenerate man are not from man, but from God." The "unregenerate man," therefore, has some "virtues"—he is not "totally depraved." Dr. W. B. Pope, possibly our greatest Methodist theologian, has rightly guarded our Methodist doctrine by his emphasis on "prevenient grace"—grace going before conversion. Says he: "Human nature is lost, and yet we are still the offspring of God. The natural and moral image has departed in its glory, and yet it is recognized as in some sense still existing. In short, original sin and original grace met in the mystery of mercy at the very gate of Paradise." I quote also from Dr. Stearns: "It would be doing violence to the

simplest facts of psychology to say that little children, who have not yet reached the point where they can make any of the great choices of life, are wholly alienated from God. I need scarcely say that there is not a hint of such a doctrine in the Bible and that it finds no support in experience."

We hold, therefore, that Horace Bushnell's great thesis is in perfect accord with the teaching of Christ and the apostles: "*That the child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise.*" We begin, therefore, by bringing our children to Christ in holy baptism and solemnly assuming in the presence of Almighty God the obligations of Christian parenthood.

To deny baptism to the children of Christians would have been considered unnatural and unchristian in the Apostolic Church. For in the thinking and practice of the Jews and early Christians the family was the social and religious unit. When a father went over from the Gentiles to the Jews, his family—his wife and children—went with him. And when a father, in the Apostolic Church, was baptized, his household was baptized with him: "The idea that a parent should enter a religion or covenant relation with God as an individual merely—*i. e.*, by himself as distinct from his immediate family, would never occur to the ancients, least of all to a Jew. There were no 'individuals' in our sharp modern sense of the term. All were seen as members of larger units, of which the family was the chief in the time of Christ, when the clan and nation were no longer so overshadowing as in earlier days. The *paterfamilias* included legally and in social ethics the

members of his household. Any change in his religious status *ipso facto* affected them. Hence to any one familiar with the modes of antique thought, no proof in any given case is needed that children from their birth were regarded as sharing their parents' religious status, objectively or socially considered: the *onus probandi* falls entirely on those who under the influence of certain modern modes of thought would maintain the contrary." (See Article on Baptism in Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.) Such was the custom, and nothing else was thought of. "It would have seemed an unnatural thing that the father should make a complete change in his religious condition and that his children should be excluded from it."

And this is a most important view of the truth which we Christians of the twentieth century, with our strong insistence on individual responsibility for character and behavior, too often entirely overlook. The family *is a unit*. The family name, the family features, and the family characteristics, continuing from generation to generation, all reveal this. Moreover, the home has its own atmosphere, whether religious or irreligious. Physically, the child is born when it comes into the world—born of a mother. But, so to speak, another birth awaits it—the birth of character. Now, the home is the womb in which is formed the character of the child—its general disposition, its mental outlook, and its religious quality. All members of the family are bound up in the one bundle of life. What affects one affects all. What affects all affects each. And, most of all, what influences the father and mother influences their

children. Beyond question, children born in Christian families do have special religious privileges and advantages. The child that is baptized is not baptized simply as *a separate individual*; he is baptized as *a member of a Christian family*. He has parents or relatives or guardians who solemnly assume holy obligations on his behalf. This is what is meant in a passage of Scripture which has puzzled some readers: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.) As another has said with true spiritual insight: "It is not meant here that the children are actually and inwardly holy persons, but that having one Christian parent is enough to change their presumptive relation to God, enough to make them Christian children as distinguished from the children of unbelievers." And so, in the teaching of the Bible, the father is not considered just as an individual man, without relation to his wife and children; neither is the mother considered as an individual without relation to her family—they are considered as father and mother along with their children and in relation to their children. So when the father was baptized, along with him were baptized all his household. In harmony with this conception of the family as a unit, we read that the Lord said: "I have known Abraham, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the ways of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice." And we read also the word of Peter to the multitude on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . For the promise is unto you, and to your children.” (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

“O God, great Father, Lord and King!
Our children unto thee we bring;
And strong in faith, and hope, and love,
We dare thy steadfast word to prove.

Thy covenant kindness did of old
Our fathers and their seed enfold,
That ancient promise standeth sure,
And shall while heaven and earth endure.”

(Bishop E. E. Hoss.)

Few things could be more hurtful to the cause of Christ than the disappearance of the apostolic custom of Infant Baptism from the usage of the Church. Such Christian denominations as refuse baptism to Christ's little ones are suffering a loss much more serious than they themselves are aware of—a loss which is suggestive of the loss the Roman Catholic Church suffers on account of the celibacy of its priesthood. One cannot estimate the contribution which the evangelical parsonage has made to the intellectual and spiritual wealth of the world. One needs only a superficial acquaintance with English and American history to discover that out from the parsonages of Protestant ministers has gone a continual stream of teachers and preachers and statesmen and physicians who have made a never-to-be-forgotten contribution to the welfare of the world—not to speak of the women of lovely character who have gone forth to beautify and sweeten all life. And there can be no doubt that such denominations as insist that little children are “totally depraved” and

deny them the right to baptism have, by this teaching and practice, placed themselves in a position where they cannot possibly give proper attention to the religious education of their children. The loss they suffer therefrom is simply incalculable! So important is it that childhood should have its rights in the kingdom of God allowed, that those Churches which, by their doctrine and history, are hopelessly committed to opposition to Infant Baptism ought to find some way to recognize the place of the child in the kingdom and ought to adopt some formal and public method by which parents might be brought to acknowledge the rights of their children and to dedicate them, in the presence of the Christian congregation, to the service of God and the care of the Church.

The significance of baptism for children, then, is just this: It does what Christ did—it sets the child in the midst. It puts the child in the central place in the mind and heart of the Church. What a difference Christ has made for childhood! The Greeks and Romans seemed to have no appreciation of the value of a little child. Even a kind-hearted father could write to his wife, who had been expecting the arrival of a baby when he left home: “If you are delivered, if it was a male, let it live; if it was a female, cast it out.” How horrible! “If it was a female, cast it out” to the kites or the crocodiles! In what amazing contrast are the words of Jesus, “In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father”! Which is to say that childhood is especially dear to God and that God takes a special interest in little children. (Matt. xviii. 10.) And that picture of

Christ with a baby in his arm—how it has drawn all hearts toward him! Artists have delighted to paint that picture; poets have united to sing about it; the hopes and aspirations of fathers and mothers have turned toward it. It has had larger influence on the thought of the world in reference to childhood than all the teachings of all other teachers: “And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. . . . And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.” (Mark x. 13–16.)

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CHAPTER I

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."
(Mark x. 14.)

Foreword

I RECENTLY heard it proclaimed from a pulpit that the ministers of all Churches other than the Baptist are not true ministers; that they disseminate doctrines of error; and that, though they be able to persuade many to accept their views, deep down in their hearts they know they are wrong.

I take this as a challenge to me either to give a valid Scriptural reason for the faith that is in me or to submit to the imputation of dishonesty. Having spent the major part of my life in a search for truth and, as a result of that search, cast my lot with the Methodists as being correct in their interpretation of Scripture, I cannot submit to the imputation and must therefore take up the gage of battle. This I do all the more cheerfully, because one of the obligations to which I subscribed when I was ordained an elder in the Church of Christ was that I would *be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word.*

This gives me a wide range of latitude and a liberty coextensive with that of the Bible. I am under the compulsion of conscience to teach no doctrine which the word of God does not authorize; nor does

the Church, by the terms of the ordination which she imposed, hold me to do so.

Now, since the Church says, "The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church," and I upon the authority of the Church hold and teach the same, the obligation is upon me to give a good and sufficient reason out of God's word for that practice or to abandon it. Most cheerfully do I assume the task.

I am sensible that in pursuance of that task I shall have to pull up some rank weeds of error that have long been growing, not only unhindered but even cultivated, in the soil of many hearts. The tearing up may give pain to some, but they should thank God for the privilege of being brought to a knowledge of the truth, though it be by a painful process. If they be true children of God and not mere partisans, or if they love truth for its own sake, they will be grateful.

I shall not be so rude and unlike my Christ as to *unchurch* any who do not hold with me on this great doctrine. I have always been able to find some true Christians in all denominations. Some of them have been translated to membership in "the Church of the first-born," and some remain to this day. To this one rule of Mr. Wesley I would bring all men if I could: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

1. *Who They Were That Were Brought to Jesus*

(a) *Ta paidia* (Greek), diminutive of *pais*, a little or young child (up to seven years). (Liddell and Scott.)

“With reference to age, child, boy.” (Cremer.) For the meaning he cites, along with other passages, Matthew ii. 16: “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children [*tous paidous*] that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, *from two years old and under*, according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men.”

“Infants, children, little ones. In the singular, universally, of an infant just born.” (Thayer.) He cites Matthew ii. 8: “And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go search diligently for the young child [*peri tou paidiou*]; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”

(b) *Parvuli* (Latin), diminutive of *parvus*, little children. Now, since *parvus* means “small, little, slight,” the diminutive *parvuli* must refer to something smaller, less, slighter than the original. Hence, *parvuli* must mean the least specimens of humanity—babes.

(c) *Petits enfants* (French), little infants. “Enfants,” children; “petits,” little; children small in size, babes.

(d) *Die kindlein* (German): “kind,” children; diminutive “lein,” little; hence, little children, babes.

(e) To show that the meaning includes *nursing infants*, I refer to Luke xviii. 15, 16: “And they brought unto him also infants [*ta brephe*], that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and

said, Suffer little children [*ta paidia*] to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Here we see that in verse 15 *ta brephe* is used in speaking of the children that were brought to Christ; in verse 16, *ta paidia*. So the terms are interchangeable. *Ta brephe* properly means *children not weaned, infants, babes, sucklings*. Thayer gives two meanings for the word: (a) An unborn child, embryo, fetus; (b) a new-born child, an infant, a babe. Similarly also Liddell and Scott: (a) A babe in the womb; (b) a new-born babe; (c) of beasts, a foal, whelp, cub. As an unborn babe is manifestly not a subject of baptism, the Roman Catholics to the contrary notwithstanding, we are limited for baptismal purposes to the one view, "a new-born babe." Thayer cites in justification Luke ii. 12: "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe [*brephe*] wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

So we are bound to conclude that those whom Christ commanded to be brought to him for his blessing were little children ranging in age from birth to seven years.

2. *The Purpose for Which They Were Brought*

They were brought that Jesus might touch and bless them. But one objects that there is nothing in this about infant baptism. No, not directly; but there is a complaint lodged here against their being brought to Jesus, and that complaint brought forth a rebuke from Jesus which establishes beyond all question the right of children to the kingdom of God. By their very innocence, their sinlessness, they are

entitled to membership in the invisible kingdom. By whose authority are they denied the right to the visible? And how are they to enter into that visible kingdom except by water baptism?

That children were members of the Church, Assembly, or Congregation under the old order no sane man will deny. The term by which that body was designated is either *sunagoge* or *ekklesia*, from which we get our words "synagogue" and "ecclesia." The first time the word occurs in the Bible is at Exodus xii. 3: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." Translated "assembly," the same word is found again at Exodus xii. 6. Tracing it on through the references given by the concordance, we find as follows: (a) Exodus xxxix. 32, the word is not found in the original text. (b) Psalm i. 5, the word rendered "congregation" is *boule*, evidently a mistranslation. (c) Exodus xvi. 2, Leviticus iv. 13, Numbers xiv. 10, Proverbs xxi. 16, the word is *sunagoge*. (d) Nehemiah v. 13, Psalm xxvi. 12, Joel ii. 16, the word is *ekklesia*.

Now the question arises, Who composed the "congregation"? The answer is found in 2 Chronicles xx. 13: "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones [*ta paidia*], their wives, and their children." But lest it be argued that "Judah" did not properly constitute the "congregation," being but one tribe, let us turn to Joel ii. 16: "Gather the people [*laos*, the people of God], sanctify the congregation [*ekklesia*], assemble the elders, gather the

children [*nepiā*, “an infant, little child”—Thayer], *and those that suck the breasts*: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.”

Antipædobaptists are sometimes very careful to tell us that if we want to know the meaning of a Greek word we must go to the Greek, particularly if that word happens to be *baptidzo*. Let them now take a little of their own medicine. *Ekklesia* is a Greek word. We have just found it employed at Joel ii. 16, where it is translated “congregation.” And be it remembered that “congregation” had *nursing infants* in it. Coming on to the New Testament, we find the same term used in Ephesians i. 22, 23: “And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church [*ekklesia*], which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” Christ is the head; the Church, his body. The same idea is presented in Ephesians v. 23.

If nursing children belonged to the body of Christ in the old days, then they belong to the body of Christ in the new. The term has not changed its meaning. Theodosia Ernest, a Baptist authority, says so (page 91, volume 2): “Christ found the word with its meaning already fixed. The meaning was suited to his purpose, and he therefore took it and appropriated it to his institution. By the appropriation it did not lose its original signification: its meaning was not changed.”

Indeed! Then why do not Baptists baptize their infants? Yet this same author (page 110, volume 2) has the face to say: “The Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church

are open and systematic rebels against the law of Christ.'

But the Church of Christ, they say, had no existence until Christ came. Theodosia Ernest (page 36, volume 2) says: "We have here the first criterion of the Christian institution: that is, that it was organized and had its beginning in the time or about the time that Christ was on the earth."

What a world of uncertainty in that! Even the *elect* themselves cannot tell exactly when they had their beginning. They are not agreed among themselves. If they go back to John the Baptist, they inevitably merge the Old into the New, or fall into the awkward position of having a Church founded by one who himself had not received "believers' baptism." If they push forward to Pentecost, then they have the anomalous thing of a body of men, not yet organized into a Church, who had neither received the baptism of the Holy Ghost nor "believers' baptism," taking from the hands of the Lord himself the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Exit *close baptism* (and consequently *close communion*); enter prejudice. So this boasted Baptist authority washes its hands of the whole difficulty by saying that the Church had its rise *in* or *about* the time Christ was on earth.

The fact is, the Church was not set up at Pentecost; *it was endued with power*. It was not set up "in or about the time that Christ was on the earth"; *it was let out to other husbandmen*. The germ of the Church was planted in the soil of God's covenant with Abraham, and out of that soil it grew. It took on its first organized visible form as related in Exodus xii. 3, already noted above. Of Christ's relation to that

organization, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, speaks in Acts vii. At verse 38 he says: "This is he, that was in the church [*ekklesia*] in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

Here it is stated that Moses was a member of the Church in the wilderness. "He was in the Church with the angel, without whom he could have done no service to the Church; but Christ is himself that angel which was with the Church in the wilderness, and therefore has an authority above Moses" (Matthew Henry). This establishes beyond question that Christ was in the Old Church as he is in the New; that he was the head of the Church then as he is the head of the Church now.

Is there yet doubt? Then hear St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 1-4): "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat of the same spiritual meat; and did all drink of the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Here, then, fifteen hundred years before Christ came in the flesh to begin the special work of his dispensation, he baptized in person all the members of the then visible Church, men, women, and children, and baptism as an initiatory rite into the Church of God was never again practiced on Jews by natural descent until the apostles were commissioned and sent out from Pentecost *to make disciples of the nations*.

Now we are ready for a definition of the Church. I quote the eminent lexicographer, Herman Cremer, Professor of Theology in the University of Griefswald:

Accordingly, *ekklesia* denotes the New Testament community of the redeemed in its twofold aspect: The entire congregation of all who are called by and to Christ, who are in the fellowship of his salvation—the Church. That the application of the word to the Church universal is primary, and that to an individual Church secondary, is clear from the Old Testament use of the word and from the fundamental statement of Christ in Matthew xvi. 18.

Should there still be doubt as to the identity of the New with the Old, turn to Isaiah v. 1–7. There one finds that God speaks of his Church under the parable of a vineyard. The marginal reference runs to Matthew xxi. 33–46. If we read there, we find that the wicked husbandmen in charge of the “vineyard” at the time of Christ’s coming slew the heir and attempted to seize on his inheritance. Those wicked men God destroyed and “let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen.” This Christ warned them God would do at verse 43: “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” But it will be noted that he did not destroy the vineyard, “the kingdom of God”; only the wicked men in charge of it. The “vineyard” was let out unto *other* husbandmen.

The words “synagogue,” “assembly,” “congregation,” and “Church,” so far as they relate to the people of God as a body, are interchangeable terms. So certain is this that the French text uses the one word “assemblée” almost without exception.

Now, if children were embraced in the meaning of those terms in the Old Testament, as I have very clearly shown, they must be embraced in the meaning of those terms in the New, unless we find some positive interdict on the part of God. Instead of finding any prohibition, we hear Peter saying to his fellow Jews at Pentecost: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children." (Acts ii. 39.) What *promise*? Why, the promise God made to Abraham in the covenant. That *covenant* was made and *promise* given 430 years before the Judaic Church. The sign and seal of that covenant was circumcision. By that "sign" every Jewish male, on the eighth day of his life, entered into visible covenant relations with God. They were schooled in the promises of God. And when they grew up, if they manifested the faith of their fathers, they became heirs, according to the promise of God, and the benefits of grace flowed and were sealed to their hearts. So, then, circumcision was not of Moses, but of Abraham.

Now the Apostle Paul (Gal. iii. 29) says: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Are children Christ's? Christ says they are: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Then they are the seed of Abraham; and being his seed, they go back beyond the organization of the Judaic Church to the covenant God made with their spiritual father and become "heirs of the promise." Thus are the Abrahamic and Christian covenants identified as one and the same. And as children were entitled to the "sign" of the Abrahamic, so also they are entitled to the "sign" of the Christian.

“Upon this rock I will build [edify] my church [ekklesia].” What *rock*? Faith in Christ. But that is precisely the same way the Abrahamic covenant was *built up*. “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” On the faith of the father the children without faith were admitted to the benefits of the covenant. Now if the Abrahamic covenant, founded in faith, was augmented, enlarged, built up by the accession of infants, the Christian covenant, grounded in faith and identical with the other, is to be built up in the same way.

At the beginning of the Christian era God did not cast all Israel off, for there were some who were in “the election of grace,” as St. Paul makes plain in Romans xi. 1–5. Jews constituted the Apostolic College. The first converts were Jews. The beginnings of the Christian Church were shaped by Jews. The first Christian sermon was preached by a Jew, and the very text of Scripture used then and for many years after was the Jewish Bible. There was no other. But the church-state of the Jews was abrogated, because of the unbelief of the major part of them, and into the place of the branches broken off the Gentiles, “cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature,” were, “contrary to nature,” grafted, grafted “into a good olive tree,” the tree which, we have already seen, rooted back in the soil of the covenant with Abraham. (See Romans xi. 13–27.)

Thus the right of children to membership in the Church and the sign of the covenant entails in one unbroken line of succession from God's covenant with Abraham down to this good hour.

CHAPTER II

APOSTOLIC PRACTICE

“And I baptized also the household of Stephanas.”
(1 Cor. i. 16.)

Foreword

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISTS say: “Infant baptism is an evil because its practice is unsupported by the word of God.”

Granted that the practice is “unsupported by the word of God,” it does not follow for that reason that it is an evil. If the simple lack of “support” from the word of God constitutes the practice an evil, then all the things done by the Churches which the word of God does not “support” are likewise evils. And, conversely, all the practices of the Church which the word of God does “support” are binding in all ages of the world, and the omission of any is also evil. What sinners that logic would make us all!

We are nowhere commanded to organize Sunday schools, yet we have them, and they have proved to be the most powerful auxiliaries of the Church. We are not specifically authorized to give the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to women, yet they commune. Positive precept for the erection of church buildings is wanting, yet we have rightly inferred that to successfully carry on the worship of God among men in the world “the body of Christ” must have fixed places of meeting, so we build them. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that the washing of feet is “supported” by the word of God (see John xiii. 15),

yet none of the leading denominations of the world follow that practice. Nothing is more plainly commanded than to "Greet one another with an holy kiss" (2 Cor. xiii. 12), yet but few organized Churches of the present day obey the command.

Thus we see that it is a mistake to interpret Scripture in that foolish and wooden way. As God is a rational being and established the Church for rational beings, with the command to perpetuate that Church in the world, it must be supposed that he left largely to the judgment of those who compose the Church the means they would employ most effectively to carry out that command. Since the vast majority of the Christian world is found in the practice of baptizing their infants, it must be inferred that they are either very degenerate people or have found in it a mighty arm of power in the extension of God's kingdom. If the minority desires its opinion to hold against the majority, let it show that "the baby sprinklers" are universally bad, that the practice works evil, or that it is positively prohibited by the word of God.

But since children compose so large a part of the mass of mankind, it is not reasonable to believe that God was so unmindful of their welfare as to provide no place for them in his Church. I cannot think of God as being less thoughtful of the welfare of his children than I would be of mine. If I were about to die, and leave my will, I certainly would not bequeath all my property to my adult children and nothing to my babies, because the adults could and the babies could not understand the provisions of that will. The Book teaches me that God is no respecter of persons, and in the light of that teaching

it is impossible for me to conceive, in the absence of any declaration to the contrary, that he has done anything for me which he has not likewise done for my child.

In the foregoing chapter I clearly showed the identity of the Abrahamic and Christian covenants, which incontestably proves the right of children to "the sign of the covenant" in this as they were in the past age of the world. In this chapter I shall support infant baptism from *apostolic practice*, showing that the apostles received and baptized infants in the reception of whole families into the Church.

The Apostles Received and Baptized Infants.

1. The Apostle Paul makes the statement: "And I baptized also the household [*oikos*] of Stephanas." Now, the question arises, Whom did Paul baptize here? The answer is, *He baptized an entire family*. The term *oikos* means "stock, race, descendants of one (man)." Under the title, "House, joined with father," Cruden's Complete Concordance of the Old and New Testaments gives eighty-seven instances in the word of God. In seventy-nine of these the word *oikos* is used, viz.: Genesis xii. 1, xx. 13, xxiv. 27, 38, 40, xxxi. 14, xxxviii. 11, xlvi. 31; Exodus xii. 31; Leviticus xxii. 13; Numbers i. 2, 4, 18, 20, 22, 24, 44, ii. 2, iii. 15, 20, iv. 38, 42, 46, xvii. 2, 3, xviii. 1, xxx. 3, 16, xxxiv. 14; Deuteronomy xxii. 21; Joshua ii. 12, xxii. 14; Judges vi. 15, ix. 18, xi. 2, xiv. 15, xvi. 31, xix. 2, 3; 1 Samuel ii. 27, 30, ix. 20, xvii. 25, xviii. 2, xxii. 16, xxiv. 21; 2 Samuel iii. 29, xiv. 9, xix. 28, xxiv. 17; 1 Kings ii. 31, xviii. 18; 1 Chronicles ii. 55, iv. 38, v. 15, 24, vii. 2, 4, 7, 9, ix. 9, 13, xii. 30, xxi.

17, xxviii. 4; Ezra ii. 59, x. 16; Nehemiah i. 6; Esther iv. 14; Psalm xlv. 10; Isaiah vii. 17, xxii. 23, 24; Jeremiah xii. 6; Luke xvi. 27; John ii. 16; Acts vii. 20.

The word "household" occurs fifty-nine times, in thirty-six of which *oikos* is used, viz.: Genesis xviii. 19, xxxv. 2, xlii. 33, xlvii. 12, 24; Leviticus xvi. 17; Numbers xviii. 31; Deuteronomy vi. 22, xi. 6, xiv. 26, xv. 20; Joshua ii. 18, vi. 25, vii. 14; Judges vi. 27, xviii. 25; 1 Samuel xxv. 17, xxvii. 3; 2 Samuel ii. 3, vi. 11, 20, xv. 16, xvii. 23, xix. 18, 41; 1 Kings iv. 7, v. 9, 11; 2 Kings vii. 9, viii. 1; 1 Chronicles xxiv. 6; Proverbs xxxi. 15, 21, 27; 1 Corinthians i. 16; 2 Timothy iv. 19.

Out of a total of one hundred and forty-six instances in the word of God where "house" and "household," meaning *family*, occur, *oikos* is used one hundred and fifteen times, among them the statement of Paul. In the other thirty-one instances such interchangeable terms as *patria*, *huios*, *oikia*, etc., are used.

Thayer, in his Corrected Edition of the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Harper & Brothers, 1899), having under consideration *patria*, says (page 495): "The Israelites were distributed into (twelve) *phulai*, tribes, descended from the twelve sons of Jacob; these were divided into *patria*, deriving their descent from the several sons of Jacob's sons; and these in turn were divided into *oikoi*, houses (or families)."

So clearly is this the meaning of the word that even Alexander Campbell, in his "The Christian System" (page 148), says:

The individual families of the nation of the Jews had still their family worship—still the worship of God was heard in the dwellings of the righteous; and, like Joshua, every good Israelite said: "As for me and my family [*oikia*, so the text; brackets mine], we will serve the Lord." (See Joshua xxiv. 15.)

Therefore, wherever the terms *oikos*, *oikia*, and their synonyms are used in the word of God, in the sense of a group of the nearest degree of kindred dwelling together, they should always be translated *family*.

Had this been done by the translators in the beginning, there never could have risen any debate and confusion over the matter of infant baptism. For there cannot possibly be such a thing as a *family* without children in it. So Webster: "Family, a group comprising a husband and wife and their dependent children, constituting a fundamental unit in the organization of society." So clearly is this meaning understood by the English-speaking world that we universally refer to a woman with child as being in a *family way*.

Therefore a proper rendering of the statement of Paul would be: "And I baptized also the family of Stephanas."

But still one objects there is nothing in this that proves there were children in that particular family. I answer that there is nothing that proves there were not. The probability is there were. The chances are in our favor. The same apostle, laying down the qualifications of a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 4), says he must be "one that ruleth well his own house [*oikos*], having his children in subjection with all gravity." Here there can be no misunderstanding, for the apostle asserts that the *family* is his own, not the

family of some one else, not servants, but *his own*, and the children so small as to be under the necessity of being held in restraint.

Precisely the same rule is applicable to the deacons: "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses [*oikos*] well."

But in these cases the children are sufficiently advanced in years as to be more particularly under the "rule" of the father. To prove that the term also implies *nursing infants*, let us study 1 Timothy v. 14: "I will therefore that the young women marry, bear children, guide the house [*oikodespotein*], give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." The term *oikodespotein* is a compound, made up of *oikos*, "family," and *despoteo*, "despotize," or use uncontrolled power. Literally, it means "to use uncontrolled power over the family, the offspring." And, pray, who interferes with the mother in her care of her tender babe? Who can take her place? She is its *despot*. She understands its cries, and she alone of all beings on earth can care for it, "guide" it, to use the language of the passage. The children of the home are necessarily attached to the mother during the period of lactation. After that the "rule" of the father begins. But note the order: "Marry," "bear children," "guide the family."

In that day and age of the world large families were the rule. A wife who bore her husband no children considered her lot a hard one indeed; the greater the number of children, the greater the honor. A family with no small children in it was a rare thing.

Then, too, for hundreds of years the Jews had been

schooled in the habit of initiating *proselyte* families into the Church. It was a well-understood provision of the old dispensation that whenever the head of a house came into the Church the rite of initiation was also administered to his family. The children became members through no act of their own, but by the act of their father. So with naturalization in our day. An Englishman, coming with his family into our country, goes into open court and declares his intention of becoming a citizen. In process of time he perfects that citizenship. No one acts but him, yet he does not leave his family still citizens of England. The infant in his mother's arms from that moment, by no act of his own but solely by the act of his father, becomes a citizen and is entitled to all the privileges this nation affords. Can human governments do more for their subjects than God can do for his?

This principle being so well understood by the Jews, I assert that nothing but a positive prohibition would have kept them from practicing under the New what they had practiced under the Old. Witness the disputes that arose in the early days of the Christian era about circumcision and the observance of days. There was never any dispute about the reception of families into the Church. The question as to the right of children to baptism, to initiation into the Church, was not raised. No one doubted it. No one disputed it. So they went on with the reception of whole families into the Church, as I shall now proceed to show.

2. The first case that attracts our attention in the Acts of the Apostles is that of Cornelius. In chapter x. 1, 2, 47, 48 we read: "There was a certain man in

Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house [*oikos*], which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. . . . Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

One recognizes in this the opening of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles. Here the graft "cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature" began to be "grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree." Against Peter's coming Cornelius "had called together his kinsmen [*suggenes*] and near friends." Of this word *suggenes*, "kinsmen," Thayer, citing this very passage (Acts x. 24), says: "Of the same kin, akin to, related by blood." So those called together could not have been merely his wife, servants, and neighbors; for his wife, servants, and neighbors were not his *kinsmen*. They could not have been his brothers and sisters and neighbors only, for we are told that Cornelius had a family (*oikos*); and, as we have already learned, a family, to be such, must have children in it. Therefore he called together his kinsmen—it may be his brothers and sisters were among them, but certainly his own family—together with his near neighbors, and as soon as Peter arrived Cornelius said: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Then Peter preached, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they were all baptized, *men, women, and*

children. The whole family of Cornelius was received into the Church, along with all the rest there present. There is not an exception noted. Peter asks: "Can any man forbid water, that these [*toutous*, so the text; "these here visibly present," so the word] should not [*me*] be baptized?" The form of the question with *me*, "not," admits of only a negative answer. It means *no one can object*. And the record shows that no one did object, for *all were baptized*.

The next case is that of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 15: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household [*oikos*], she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

Here no extraneous persons can possibly be brought into the question. Only Lydia and her household (*oikos*) were baptized. Nor can it be said that the children were *grown up* and received baptism after they had believed for themselves; for the record plainly states that "she [Lydia] attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." There is not the least intimation that anyone else in that home was large enough to "attend" (*prosecho*, so the text; "to give attention, take heed," so the word) to the things which Paul said. Yet the household, the family, was baptized along with the mother. What plainer evidence of a family baptism can anyone want than that? and what can be plainer than that

there were children in that home too small to exercise saving faith yet who received baptism with the believing mother?

The next case is that of the Philippian jailer, Acts xvi. 30-33: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house [*oikos*]. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his [*hoi autou hapantes*], straight-way."

One observes here that the condition laid down, not only for his salvation but also those of his house (*oikos*), is that *he believe* on the Lord Jesus. Nothing is said about the exercise of faith on the part of the children. It is the father who is commanded to believe. The verb is imperative, second person, singular number. "*Pisteuson* [believe thou, not ye] on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house* [*family*]." He believed, and as a result of that belief he and *all those out of his own loins* were baptized, all together. This is a clear instance of family baptism.

The next case is the baptism of Crispus and his house, Acts xviii. 8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Here the expression "with all his house" is *sun holo to oiko autou*, "with his entire family." It is expressly stated that *the entire family believed*, but not that it was baptized. Baptism is asserted only of the

many Corinthians who heard and believed, spoken of in the last clause of the sentence. But no contender for *believers' baptism* would allow that Crispus and his entire family were not baptized, for the simple reason that *they all believed*. If they say that Crispus and his entire family were baptized *because* they all believed, then they must allow also that all other families marked as Christians, where baptism is not expressly asserted, were also baptized.

The next instance of this character which meets us is found in Romans xvi. 10: "Salute them which are of Aristobulus's household." True, these are not mentioned as *believing*; but since the epistle itself was addressed "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," it follows unquestionably that those in that household were "saints" and therefore *baptized*.

The next instance is that of Narcissus, Romans xvi. 11: "Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord." Here it is not expressly stated that those in that household were baptized; but since they were *in the Lord*, it follows that they were baptized.

The last case of this character is that of Onesiphorus, 2 Timothy i. 16: "The Lord give mercy [*eleos*] unto the house [*oikos*] of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." Of the term *eleos*, "mercy," employed here, Thayer, citing this passage, says: "The mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life." So I take it that those in that family were true Christians and were therefore baptized.

3. We have then eight instances of family baptism—four of which, Stephanas, Cornelius, Lydia, and the jailer, are mentioned expressly as baptized; two, Crispus and Narcissus, as “believing” and “in the Lord,” from which it follows plainly that they were baptized; and two, Aristobulus and Onesiphorus, the one comprehended among those whom Paul addressed as “saints,” the other embraced in his prayer as “true Christians” whom Christ, at his coming, will bless with eternal life, and consequently baptized.

Are there eight instances of the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament? No, not by any means. Can eight clear passages be cited for the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? No. Yet all Christendom concedes that those services are vindicated “by the practice of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament,” while many vehemently deny, in the face of far weightier testimony, their practice of infant baptism. *On the face of it there seems to be either ignorance or willful rebellion.*

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles there are ten recorded separate instances of baptism, viz.: the baptism of the multitude at Pentecost (Acts ii. 41), the baptism of the Samaritans (Acts viii. 12), the baptism of Simon (Acts viii. 13), the baptism of the eunuch (Acts viii. 35–37), the baptism of Saul (Acts ix. 18), the baptism of the household of Cornelius (Acts x. 47, 48), the baptism of Lydia’s household (Acts xvi. 15), the baptism of the jailer’s household (Acts xvi. 33), the baptism of Crispus’s household (Acts xviii. 8), and the baptism of the disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix. 5). Of these, two fifths, or nearly

one half, are family baptisms. The proportion is 2 to 5. The number of names of similar converts in the New Testament is said to be fifty-five. If the proportion be carried out, there were then twenty-two baptized families. The aggregate of the specific numbers given as baptized at different times in the book of the Acts of the Apostles is 3,018, which would by the proportion give 1,205 baptized families. Considering that numerous instances are given where many believed, notably at one time "about five thousand," and nothing is said of their baptism, may we reasonably conjecture that 10,000 were received into the Church in the history of the Acts of the Apostles? Then that would give us 4,000 baptized families. How many, may it be supposed, were received in the whole of New Testament times? About 100,000? That would give us 40,000 baptized families.

Does one still insist that I have not proved the existence of infants in any of those eight families? Remembering that the word *oikos*, "family," necessitates children, what are the chances that eight families, taken at a venture, will not have at least one child somewhere in age between birth and seven years? Thus is it proved as nearly as can be done, outside of a positive demonstration (which is only possible in mathematics), the existence of little children in those families, and so have I proved *apostolic practice in the baptism of infants*.

4. But before I close this chapter I desire to call attention to some further facts that throw light on this great question. In Proverbs xxii. 6 one reads: "Train up [*egkainidzo*, so the text; "to initiate,

consecrate, dedicate," so the word] a child [*neos*, so the text; "recently born one," so the word] in the way [*kata ten hodon autou*, so the text; *kata* is distributive and indicates "a succession of things following one another," hence, *initiate him*] in [to] the way he should go [by a dedication to God]: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The marginal reference is to Ephesians vi. 4 and 2 Timothy iii. 15. Suppose we turn to those passages. Ephesians vi. 4 reads: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." Here the children are "in the Lord" and also in the Church. How do I know they are *in the Church*? Paul addressed his letter to the Church—"to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." Those children were members of the Church; had been *initiated* into the way they ought to go; dedicated to God in baptism.

Does the dedication of a child to God do any good? Can the Spirit of God make any impression on the heart of *a little child*? Let us read 2 Timothy iii. 15: "And that from a child [*brephos*] thou hast known [*oidas*] the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ."

This exactly comports with the case of Samuel. Hannah had no child, and she keenly felt the sting of being childless. She made it a matter of earnest prayer: "And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give

unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (1 Sam. i. 10, 11.)

God heard that cry, and a child was born. Did Hannah keep her vow? Listen: "And when she had weaned him, she took him with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young." (1 Sam. i. 24.) *There she dedicated him to God, just as she said she would do.*

Did that dedication do the child any good? I must answer by his life. He became one of the greatest judges Israel ever had, remained true to God all the days of his life, and died mourned by all. When he had anointed Saul king and surrendered the government of Israel to him, the people said of him: "Thou has not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught [in the way of a bribe; brackets mine] from any man's hand." (1 Sam. xii. 4.)

Surely it is a good thing to be akin to the covenant!

CHAPTER III

THE PRACTICE OF THE FATHERS

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (Ps. xliv. 1.)

Foreword

HERETOFORE I have relied upon my own independent investigation of *original sources*. If I have in some instances followed the arguments of others, I have nevertheless tested those arguments by my own investigations, taking nothing for granted because some man of great learning said so. Manifestly I must now depend upon the investigations of others; the original sources are not accessible to me. I shall make extensive use of "The History of Infant Baptism," by Dr. William Wall, who became Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, in the year 1674, and held that position for fifty-three years, or until the day of his death, January 13, 1727. He was a man of letters and great learning, so much so that the Oxford Academy conferred upon him the degree "Doctor in Theology."

Because of the fierce controversy that raged in his day over the question of infant baptism, he undertook an investigation of all the "authors that lived and wrote within the first 400 years" of the Christian era, the same "being an impartial collection of all such passages . . . as do make for or against it," intending, as he himself affirms, "that the impartial management should have left the reader uncertain which practice I myself had owned." (See Preface to

“The History of Infant Baptism,” in two parts, page xiv, E. P. Dutton & Co.; Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh.)

For fidelity to truth this monumental work is unequalled. It has stood the test of research, the fires of criticism, and remains to this day uncontested and incontrovertible.

The Apostolic Age proper ended with the death of John about the year 100 A.D., and the Patristic Age succeeded. By the term “Fathers” is meant those great leaders who succeeded the apostles in the management and leadership of the Church. They fall into four groups: (1) The Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias, all of whom were born within the Apostolic Age; (2) the Ante-Nicene Fathers of the second and third centuries, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen (Greek), and Tertullian and Cyprian (Latin); (3) the Nicene Fathers of the fourth century, Eusebius, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Epiphanius (Greek), and Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose (Latin); and (4) the Post-Nicene Fathers of the fifth and sixth centuries, Cyril of Alexandria Theodoret, and John of Damascus (in the East), and Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, and Gregory the Great (in the West).

From the death of John on until “the solemn inauguration of the imperial state-church” by the Nicene Council, A.D. 325, a distance in history of two hundred and twenty-five years, there is great obscurity, sometimes well-nigh total darkness, particularly in the first fifty years of that period.

Philip Schaff ("History of the Christian Church," Vol. 2, Eighth Edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1905, page 7) says: "The hand of God has drawn a bold line of demarcation between the century of miracles and the succeeding ages, to show, by the abrupt transition and the striking contrast, the difference between the work of God and the work of man, and to impress us the more deeply with the supernatural origin of Christianity and the incomparable value of the New Testament."

Whatever the cause and purpose, the fact remains that the darkness is there. In those days the fires of the pagan persecution blazed. It was the age of faith, painful self-denial, heroism, martyrdom. Men were more concerned about living Christianity than about writing a defense of it. Hence, "after the death of John only a few witnesses remain to testify of the apostolic days, and their writings are few in number, short in compass, and partly of doubtful origin: a volume of letters and historical fragments, accounts of martyrdom, the pleadings of two or three apologists; to which must be added the rude epitaphs, faded pictures, and broken sculptures of the subterranean church in the catacombs." (Schaff, "The History of the Christian Church," as above, page 12.)

Since the rise of the Reformation this obscure period of history has been the battle ground between Roman and Protestant, each claiming it for his creed. "But," Schaff says, "it is a sectarian abuse of history to identify the Christianity of this martyr period either with Catholicism or with Protestantism. It is rather the common root out of which both have

sprung, Catholicism. (Greek and Roman) first and Protestantism afterwards."

Out of this age of night and tempest, what message have the "Fathers" brought us regarding the practice of infant baptism? Let us see.

*The Fathers Practiced Infant Baptism, No Catholic,
Sect, or Sectary, That Owned Any Water
Baptism at All, Denying It to Infants
Even Down to the Twelfth Century*

Of the first group, or Apostolic Fathers, Schaff (Vol. 2, page 259) says: "The apostolic fathers make, indeed, no mention of it. But their silence proves nothing; for they hardly touch upon baptism at all, except Hermas, and he declares it necessary to salvation, even for the patriarchs in Hades (therefore, as we may well infer, for children also)."

Of the second group, or Ante-Nicene Fathers, I begin with Justin, surnamed the Martyr. He was born of pagan parents about the year 100 A.D., and was brought up as a pagan, being schooled in the philosophies of that day, particularly of the Stoics and Platonists, to the last of which he finally adhered. He was converted to Christianity about the year 135 A.D., and thirty years later, or in 165 A.D., died a martyr to the faith of Christ. He expressly taught "the capacity of *all* men for spiritual circumcision by baptism; and his 'all' can with the less propriety be limited, since he is here speaking to a Jew." (Schaff.)

But Alexander Campbell denies that Justin Martyr says anything about the question of infant baptism. In his "The Christian System," page 236, he

puts Mr. Wall on the stand in the following manner:

As you trace the history of infant baptism, Mr. Wall, as nigh the apostolic times as possible, pray why do you quote Justin Martyr, who never mentions it?

W. Wall.—“Because his is the most ancient account of *the way of baptizing*, next the scripture, and shows the plain and simple manner of administering it. Because it shows that the Christians of those times (many of whom lived in the days of the apostles) used the word ‘*regeneration*’ (or ‘being born again’) for *baptism*, and that they were taught to do so by the apostles. And because we see by it that they understood John iii. 5, of water baptism; and so did all the writers of these four hundred years, NOT ONE MAN EXCEPTED.” (Page 54.)

The passage from Wall, out of which this *defender of the faith* built this forgery, is as follows:

1. Because it is the most ancient account of the way of baptizing, next the Scripture, and shows the plain and simple manner of administering it. The Christians of these times had lived, many of them at least, in the apostles’ days.

2. Because it shows that the Christians of these times used the word *regeneration* (or being born again) for baptism: and that they were taught so to do by the apostles. And it will appear by the multitude of places I shall produce that they used it customarily and appropriated it as much to signify baptism as we do the word christening. They used also *anakainismos* or *kainopoia*, renewing, and *photismos*, enlightening, for the same thing: as appears in the first and last words of the passage.

3. Because we see by it that they understood that rule of our Saviour, “Except one be regenerated [or born again] of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” of water baptism, and concluded from it that without such baptism no person could come to heaven. And so did all the writers of these four hundred years, not one man excepted. (“History of Infant Baptism,” Vol. 1, as above, page 36.)

Thus has Campbell wandered over three paragraphs of this ancient work, taking up words and phrases at random and stringing them together as a connected statement, with no other purpose than to deceive, in order to force this man of God to the support of a partisan view. By such a process I can prove by the Bible itself that the world was never created, Adam never sinned, and Christ never died for the sins of the world.

After this display of audacity we are prepared for almost anything. Mr. Campbell continues Mr. Wall on the stand:

Did any of the ancients use the word *matheteueo* (to disciple) as it is used in the commission, or did they call the baptized *discipled*?

W. Wall.—“Justin Martyr, in his second apology to Antoninus, uses it. His words are: “Several persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, *who were discipled* [*matheteueo*] to Christ, in or from their childhood, do continue uncorrupted.” (Page 54.)

The passage from Wall is as follows:

Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled (or made disciples) to Christ in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted (or virgins).

Thus it will be seen that Mr. Campbell inserted the words “or from” in the quotation, without the least intimation that they formed no part of the original statement, a thing he had no moral right to do, *in order to make the impression that just as soon as the persons in question began to leave the period of childhood they were made disciples to Christ, and not while they were yet in their childhood.*

To show what the mind of Wall was in regard to the meaning of the quotation, I give his full comment on the passage:

St. Justin's word, *ematheteuthesan*, were *discipled* or *made disciples*, is the very same word that had been used by St. Matthew in expressing our Saviour's command, *matheteusate, disciple* (or make disciples) *all the nations*. And it was done to these persons, Justin says, in their childhood. So that whereas the Antipædobaptists do say that when our Saviour bids the apostles disciple the nations, baptizing them, he cannot mean infants; because he must be understood to bid them baptize only such among the nations as could be made disciples: and infants, they say, cannot be made disciples; they may perceive that in the sense in which Justin understood the word they may be made disciples. And Justin wrote but ninety years after St. Matthew, who wrote about fifteen years after Christ's ascension. And they that were seventy years old at this time must have been made disciples to Christ in their childhood (as he says they were), about thirty-six years after his ascension: that is, in the midst of the apostles' times and within twenty years after St. Matthew's writing. (Pages 36, 37.)

Irenæus, pupil of Polycarp "and a faithful bearer of Johanean tradition," lived from 130–202 A.D. In 155 A.D. he went with Polycarp on a mission to Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, concerning the dispute that had arisen between the Asiatic and Western Churches over the observance of Easter. About 177 A.D. he visited Rome again, bearing letters with reference to the Montanists. He wrote in Greek, but only a Latin translation is preserved. His work, "Against Heresies," to combat the Gnosticism of that day, has been preserved. Schaff says that, according to him, "Christ passed through all stages of life to sanctify them all, and came to redeem through him-

self 'all who through him are *born again* unto God, sucklings, children, boys, youths, and adults.'"

This Wall confirms, quoting from this work, "Against Heresies," the following passage:

Therefore as he was a Master he had also the age of a Master. Not disdaining nor going in a way above human nature nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind, but sanctifying every several age by the likeness that it has to him. For he came to save all persons by himself: all, I mean, who by him are regenerated (or baptized) unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons. Therefore he went through the several ages: for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants: to little ones he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness: to youths he was a youth, etc. (Wall, page 38.)

Going back to Schaff:

This profound view seems to involve an acknowledgment not only of the idea of infant baptism, but also of the practice of it; for in the mind of Irenæus and the ancient Church baptism and regeneration were intimately connected and almost identified. In an infant, in fact, any regeneration but through baptism cannot be easily conceived. A moral and spiritual regeneration, as distinct from sacramental, would imply conversion, and this is a conscious act of the will and exercise of repentance and faith, of which the infant is not capable. (Pages 259, 260.)

Tertullian, of North Africa, was born before the year 160 A.D. and died after the year 220 A.D. He became a convert to Christianity before the end of the second century. In 203 he became a schismatic, going over to the Montanists, and thenceforth was unsparingly severe in his denunciation of the "psychics," as he termed the members of the Catholic

Church. He was a prominent figure in the history of the early Church, and his views were stamped upon the theology of the West, giving it a legalistic character which it never lost, ultimately passing over into Protestantism through Augustine. He *opposed* the practice of infant baptism, not on account of its being an innovation, but on the ground of what he termed *religious prudence*. There were seven crimes which he called *mortal sins*, such as adultery, murder, and apostasy, and anyone guilty of these after baptism, in his view, forever sacrificed the grace of baptism. "For no less reason," to use his own language, "unmarried persons ought to be kept off, who are likely to come into temptation," etc. (See Wall, Vol. 1, page 45.) Therefore the ground of his opposition was a fear lest the child so baptized should prove "of a wicked disposition" and so forfeit the benefits of his baptism, for the ordinance could not be repeated and only washed out "the guilt contracted before its reception."

In his day it was no question whether the children of Christian parents might and should be baptized—on this all were agreed—but whether they might be baptized so early as the second or third day after birth or, according to the precedent of the Jewish circumcision, on the eighth day. (Schaff, Vol. 2, pages 261, 262.)

Origen was born at Alexandria in the year 185 A.D. and died about the year 254 A.D. He was educated in the famous catechetical school in that city, with Clement as his teacher, and afterwards himself became the head of it. He traveled widely and wrote much. It is said that his volumes numbered 6,000. At any rate, he was the most learned Christian writer

and teacher of that century. He was strictly ascetic, having in his zeal for holiness committed self-emasculation in order to carry out literally the words of Christ at Matthew xix. 12. His father was a Christian and died a martyr to the faith under Septimius Severus (202 A.D.). It is also said that his great-grandfather and grandfather were Christians, and it is probable that he himself was baptized in infancy. However that may be, he certainly could not have been ignorant as to whether the Churches of that day practiced infant baptism, nor as to whether they received the practice from the apostles or not. And here is what he says about it:

For this also it was, that the Church had from the apostles a tradition (or order) to give baptism even to infants. For they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit: by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin. (Wall, Vol. 1, page 52.)

Cyprian was born at Carthage, about the year 200 A.D., of a noble and wealthy heathen family. He was converted to Christianity and received Christian baptism about the year 246 A.D. Two years after, contrary to ecclesiastical law and against his own protest, he was, by acclamation of the people, raised to the Bishopric of Carthage and the head of the whole North African clergy and for ten years administered the affairs of that office. Under the fierce persecutions of Valerian he died a martyr to the faith September 14, 258 A.D.

During his administration a council of bishops was held at Carthage in the year 253 A.D., sixty-six being

present. To that council was addressed a letter by one Fidus, a country bishop, concerning two cases about which he desired their opinion. One of these was as to "whether an infant, before it was eight days old, might be baptized," he himself holding that it should not be. To that letter the council made reply:

Cyprian and the rest of the bishops who were present at the council, sixty-six in number, to Fidus our brother, greeting. We read your letter, most dear brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, etc. But as to the case of infants: whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born: and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born, we are all in our assembly of the contrary opinion.

Then after going through a lengthy discussion of the question, pointing out what seemed to them the error of his position, they conclude as follows:

This therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the assembly; that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind and affectionate to all. Which rule, as it holds for all; so we think it is more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born: to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion. Dear brother, we wish you always good health. (Wall, Vol. 2, pages 63, 64.)

The quotations out of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers I shall not weary the reader by giving, since the practice is conceded from Tertullian on this way by even the most radical Antipædobaptists. Alexander Campbell ("The Christian System," page 237)

says: "Tertullian, the first who mentions infant baptism [though he was not; brackets mine], flourished about A.D. 216. He writes against the practice," etc.

We have seen that Tertullian was born a heathen sometime before the year 160 A.D., was converted to Christianity, and became a schismatic in 203 A.D. by going over to the Montanists. His opposition to the practice must therefore have been between 160 and 203. To have opposed it he must have found the practice in vogue at the time of his entrance into the Church, or he would have opposed it as an innovation and not on the ground of prudence.

The Montanists to whom Tertullian turned were also in the practice of infant baptism. This sect originated in Asia Minor under the leadership of Montanus. The date of its rise is variously put at from 126 A.D. to 180 A.D. Taking *the mean*, this would fix its rise at 150 A.D., or just fifty years from the days of the apostles. And this sect was not originally a departure from the faith. The Church, then, must have been in the practice when that sect arose. Besides, Schaff says (Vol. 2, page 260):

In the Churches of Egypt infant baptism must have been practiced from the first. For, aside from some not very clear expressions of Clement of Alexandria, Origen distinctly derives it from the tradition of the apostles; and through his journeys in the East and West he was well acquainted with the practice of the Church in his time.*

If infant baptism was practiced "in the Churches

*See also George A. Lofton's "English Baptist Reformation," page 251.

of Egypt" from the first, when was that "first"? "Christianity reached proconsular Africa in the second, perhaps already at the close of the first century, we do not know when and how." (Schaff, Vol. 2, page 27.)

Thus we can, to a moral certainty, trace the practice of infant baptism in four different ways from the days of the apostles to Tertullian's time, 160-220 A.D., this side of which the practice is no longer in dispute. Briefly recapitulated, those four ways are as follows: (1) Through the testimony of Irenæus, the pupil of Polycarp, who was in turn the disciple of John; (2) through the testimony of Justin Martyr, some of whose associates, sixty or seventy years old, were baptized in infancy, or in the midst of the apostles' days; (3) through the testimony of Origen, himself baptized in infancy, whose father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were Christians, running in an unbroken line far back into the apostles' days; and (4) through the practice of the Montanists and the Church of North Africa.

Such is the practice of the Catholics. We must go now to the "sects."

We have already seen that the Montanists, to whom Tertullian turned, had nothing different from the Catholics with respect to infant baptism. What about the Novatians?

This "sect" had its rise in the third century. They were followers of one Novatus, who was excommunicated from the Catholic Church about 251 A.D. They were also sometimes called Cathari. The issue raised between them and the Catholics was very similar to the one raised between the Montanists and

the Catholics, which issue reappeared in the fourth century in what is known as *the Donatist controversy*. As asserted in the creed, both believed that the Church was holy, the Novatians contending that holiness applied to the membership; the Catholics, to the sacraments. *Both practiced infant baptism.*

The Donatists, followers of Donatus the Great, a schismatic body of Christians in North Africa, as we have already seen, took their rise in the fourth century. Under the persecutions of Diocletian, 303 A.D., the Christians were ordered to give up their Bibles. Those who did so were contemptuously called *traditors* by their more steadfast fellows, and the question in the Church came to be *how to deal with those who did surrender*. The main body of the Church favored mildness; the Donatists, extreme measures. So the schism.

Did they practice infant baptism? That is the question. Since the Baptists have been accustomed to claiming the Donatists *in their line of succession*, I presume a Baptist authority on that point will be considered sufficient.

British bishops were at the Catholic Council of Nice in 325 A.D., and at the Council of Arles and other convocations of Catholic bishops before the time of Austin in England. Like the Novatians and Donatists, who revolted from Rome and still retained her polity and infant baptism (250-389), these British Christians, though independent of Rome, were at that time very much like Rome. (George A. Lofton, D.D., "English Baptist Reformation," page 11, Charles T. Dearing, Louisville, Ky., 1899.)

But of the "sects" in those first four hundred years there is scarcely any end. One's patience would

fail in tracing them all. I shall therefore conclude with Wall's general survey:

Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, St. Austin, and Theodoret, who wrote each of them catalogues of all the sects and sorts of Christians that they knew or had ever heard of, do none of them mention any that denied infant baptism, except those who denied all baptism. (Wall, Vol. 1, page 263.)

This establishes the practice from the apostles to the beginning of the fifth century. What about it from then on to the year 1000? Wall says:

As in the first four hundred years there is none but one, Tertullian, who advised it to be deferred till the age of reason, and one, Nazianzen, till three years of age, in case of no danger of death. So in the following six hundred years there is no account or report of any one man that opposed it at all. (Vol. 2, page 123.)

Frequently one reads in some cheap doctrinal tract the published claim of some Roman Catholic priest that the Bible does not authorize the baptism of infants, but that the practice was *instituted* by the Roman Catholic Church. This is purely an appeal to prejudice and, being so, has been made to render faithful service to both the Roman Catholic and Antipædobaptist causes.

There is a fatal weakness in that claim, which the Antipædobaptists either do not see or hope we will not see. If the Roman Catholic Church *instituted* the practice of infant baptism, then *the minutes of the council in which the practice was instituted* ought to show that action in the proceedings. So I believe. So every sane man must believe. With that conviction I addressed a letter to the *Dallas Morning News*, August 12, 1912:

Did any council of the Catholic Church ever formally institute the practice of infant baptism? If so, what council? In case there was such formal action, I will thank you for the canon.

To this I received the following reply:

Without having the opportunity to go very thoroughly into the matter of infant baptism, we can quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia as follows:

“St. Cyprian’s letter to Fidus declares that the Council of Carthage in 253 reprobated the opinion that the baptism of infants should be delayed until the eighth day after birth. The Council of Milevis in 416 anathematizes whosoever says that infants lately born are not to be baptized. The Council of Trent solemnly defines the doctrine of infant baptism (Sess. VII, Can. XII). It also condemns (Can. XIV) the opinion of Erasmus that those who have been baptized in infancy should be left free to ratify or reject the baptismal promises after they had become adult. Theologians also call attention to the fact that as God sincerely wishes all men to be saved, he does not exclude infants, for whom baptism of either water or blood is the only means possible. The doctrines also of the universality of original sin and of the all-comprehending atonement of Christ are stated so plainly and absolutely in the Scriptures as to leave no solid reason for denying that infants are included as well as adults.”

The practice of infant baptism seems to have been of too long standing to be made the subject of formal institution by the Roman Church.

There is no record of the institution of infant baptism except in the word of God. That institution took place at the foot of Sinai, when all Israel entered into covenant with God. Its practice has not ceased to this day. It has had one unbroken line of succession from Exodus xix. 10 to this good hour. Peter Bruis, founder of the sect of Petrobrusians in the year

1146 A.D., is the first Antipædobaptist preacher in the world, and the sect he founded is the first Christian Church in all the world to hold to that opinion. *If the Baptists go through the Petrobrusians back to the apostles, they will have to wade infant baptism all the way, and up to their eyes, without finding, like Noah's dove, a single place to rest their weary feet.*

CHAPTER IV

UNDER THE GREAT COMMISSION .

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

Foreword

SHOULD some person some two thousand years hence delve into the literature of this present generation, he could not but be impressed with the fact that many things new and strange came into existence in this age. For example, the invention of “the flying machine” and the daring exploits of “the bird men” are so much discussed in current literature he could not escape the conclusion that flying machines began to be in this age and that their novelty attracted wide attention. Coming on down a few hundred years from this time and finding little or nothing said about flying machines, but the literature of that day abounding in descriptions of the novelties of the time, he would not infer from that silence that the people no longer used flying machines, unless he should find somewhere a law of the nation proscribing their use among the people. Or, if he should find where some in that age were opposing the use of flying machines, he would not infer from that opposition that the practice had just then come into vogue, but that it had been running straight on from its rise.

Precisely this is the case with reference to infant baptism. In all the history of it I have not found the record of any who opposed it as an *innovation*. The only conclusion I am able to draw from this is that nowhere within the Christian era did the practice take its rise. But it must have had a beginning sometime, somewhere; and since there is no account of its origin this side the birth of Christ, we must look for that beginning in the centuries beyond. If we find it there, then the inevitable conclusion will be that the practice has kept steadily on through all the succeeding centuries since that day.

Turning to the records of the people who shaped the beginnings of the Christian Church, we read: "And when a stranger shall sojourn [*proserchomai*, so the text; "approach God, in order to receive his atonement and grace," so the word] with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." (Ex. xii. 48.)

This was given before the departure of the children of Israel from the land of bondage. After that departure, after the passage of the Red Sea, they were all baptized unto Moses, the type of Christ, in the cloud and in the sea, and had come to the foot of Sinai, the Lord commanded Moses: "Go unto the people, and sanctify [*hagnidzo*] them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes." (Ex. xix. 10.) The term "sanctify" in this connection means to *purify*, "the same kind of purification required of the priests for divine service, and indeed all who be-

longed to the chosen people" (Cremer). The prescription for purifying the priests was: "And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." (Num. viii. 7.)

Then, again, we find this requirement: "And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord; as ye do, so he shall do." (Num. xv. 14.)

So here are three separate and distinct things required of the Jews at their entering into covenant with God at Sinai: *circumcision*, *baptism*, and *the offering of a bloody sacrifice*. This was the requirement for all males; baptism and the sacrifice, for all females.

Here, then, is the institution of infant baptism, and the practice has not ceased to this day. As with them, so with the stranger. When a proselyte was received, he went through precisely the same process. In proof, I give one of the many quotations listed out of their writings by Wall (Vol. 1, page 6):

"As you are, so shall the stranger be." As you are; that is, as was done to your fathers. And what was done to them? Your fathers did not enter into covenant but by circumcision and baptism and sprinkling of blood. So neither do proselytes enter into covenant, but by circumcision and baptism and sprinkling of blood.

When a heathen family was brought in, the father and all his male children were circumcised, then the entire family was baptized, and a bloody offering was made for all. This practice was so widely known

among the nations of that day who had any intercourse with the Jews that even Christ charged the Jews with compassing land and sea to make proselytes to their faith. (Matt. xxiii. 15.)

Now, Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Whatever, therefore, was not fulfilled of the law and the prophets in his sufferings and death was continued. His death took away the need of the bloody sacrifice; *the type was realized*. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost took away the necessity of circumcision; *the type was realized*. But one thing remained of the initiatory rites, and that was water baptism. This Christ perpetuated to the end of time: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

If Christ had said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *circumcising* them," none would have misunderstood its application to children. Why, then, do men persist in misunderstanding the application when he uses *baptizing*, a thing commanded of the Jews, and which they had been practicing for fifteen hundred years? Does one suppose that if those early Christian Jews had ceased to baptize children, had ceased to receive babies along with their parents into the Church, the matter would have excited no notice? It would have raised the greatest controversy in the early Church. The fact, then, that there is no record of any such controversy, no intimation given that the

practice ceased, is the strongest possible presumptive evidence that the question was never raised. That silence, together with Christ's injunction, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," settles the question beyond any shadow of doubt.

Children Must Be Included under the Great Commission

Here any specific reference to infants as such is wanting. But in the light of what has just been said in our "Foreword," how must those Jews, to whom that commission was given, have understood it? There was no other nation in that day that made even a pretense of worshiping the true God, and consequently they had no other example than their own to follow, unless Christ should give them something new. That he did not do. What attitude, then, must we expect them to take with reference to the child?

Suppose the bishop, acting under the authority of the Church, should command me to go to some island of the sea, where the people had never heard the name of Jesus, and make disciples of the natives: Would you expect me to baptize the infants? Naturally. Why? Because infant baptism is the practice of the Methodist Church. Suppose, on the other hand, the Baptist Church should send a man to that same island: Would you expect him to baptize the babies? No. Why? Because it is contrary to the teaching of that Church. What, then, must one expect those Jews to do, who had in their hands a commission, a commission without qualification, to make disciples of the nations of the earth? There is and can be but

one answer: *They would bring into covenant relation every child.*

Did Christ, then, in the commission authorize the baptism of infants? *It is impossible to fulfill it without baptizing the infants.*

Let us look into the construction of the commission. In the foregoing pages I have frequently adverted to the fact that the word *matheteusate*, translated "teach" in the commission, means "make disciples"; that is, introduce them into the school of Jesus, make them learners. As the matter stands in the Authorized Version, there are two imperatives, "go" and "teach," but that is a mistranslation. It is *the making of disciples* that is imperative; the "going" is in the participle form, so is the baptizing and so the teaching. The correct translation is, "*Going* [or as you go] into all the world, make all the nations disciples, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you through all the days to the end of the age."

But notice the order: *Going, baptizing, teaching, make disciples.* The missionary activities of the Church are comprehended in the *going*. That brings the Church into contact with the nations. The next step is introducing them into the school of Jesus, which can only be done by baptism, the only thing remaining of the initiatory rites which was not fulfilled by the sufferings and death of Christ. Then follows the course of instruction in that school. The plan primarily belongs to Jesus, not to me, and contenders for the letter of the law should make no protest.

Now, the matter of making disciples involves two elements, *matriculation* and *instruction*; in the school of Christ, *baptizing* and *teaching*. *Matheteuo* means "to instruct anyone, to teach, to make anyone a disciple," . . . it "being divided . . . into the two elements *baptidzein* and *didaskein*." (Cremer, page 412.)

But the baptizing comes first, the teaching after. Paul seems to recognize this, for we read: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts xix. 1-8.)

Precisely the same principle is observed in all the family baptisms, which we noticed in the second chapter. Paul's work among the Gentiles from beginning to end implies it. The Jews had been under

the tutelage of the Church for over fifteen hundred years, and it is not to be supposed that the Gentiles, in the short space of Paul's ministry among them, could have advanced to the Jews' knowledge of God. If, then, they had waited for their *instruction* before they received their *baptism*, some of them would have been waiting until now; for after nearly two thousand years of the Christian Church some of its members have not yet attained to the knowledge the Jews had nearly four thousand years ago of the infant's right to membership in the Church and the sign of the covenant. So in their rude, ignorant state Paul matriculated them, as little children, in the school of Jesus and, as their teacher, began to give them their course of instruction in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

Now, if Philip could, by baptism, introduce a rude, uncouth, mercenary person like Simon, a man "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," into the school of Jesus, pray, what crime do I commit when I introduce, by the same process, an innocent child as a learner in the kindergarten department of the same school?

There has never been a national Church that did not baptize children. The Greek Catholics, as the State Church of Russia; the Roman Catholics, as the State Church of Italy, and various other nations of the world; the Episcopalian, as the State Church of England; the Presbyterian, as the State Church of Scotland; the Lutheran, as the State Church of Germany—all these practice the rite. It would be impossible to disciple a nation without including the children. Of that vast horde of 2,000,000 souls that

poured out of Egypt into the wilderness, 600,000 were men. Allowing an equal number of women, there were 800,000 children. In no way could that nation of Jews be said to have entered into covenant with God had those 800,000 children been excluded. So no nation can possibly be said to be discipled, entered as learners in the school of Jesus, whose children are excluded from baptism. In fact, a nation cannot be said to be discipled as long as there is a single citizen in it unbaptized. The purpose of the commission and the aim of the Church is to bring all the nations of the world into covenant relations with God. The most effective way to accomplish that task is by introducing infants into the school of Christ and grounding them in the knowledge of God.

But it is contended that infant baptism is *compulsory religion* and contrary to the spirit of religious liberty. When it is imposed by the law of the Church, it is *compulsory religion* and leads to a profanation of the sacrament; but when left to the option of the parents, it is no longer "compulsory." It is allowable that a parent may do anything for his child which, in his judgment and the common judgment of mankind, is for the good of the child.

If the proselyte "who came over to the Jewish religion and was baptized into it had any infant children then born to him, they also were at the father's desire circumcised and baptized and admitted as proselytes. The child's inability to declare or promise for himself was not looked on as a bar against his reception into the covenant: but the desire of his father to dedicate him to the true God was counted available and sufficient to justify his admission.

. . . And the reason which the Jewish writers give, why it was not necessary to stay to see whether the child, when come to age, would be willing to engage himself to the covenant of the true God or not, is this: that it is out of the reach of any doubt or controversy, that this is for his good. Where there may be any question made whether a thing be beneficial or not, the concerns of a child are not to be disposed of by another: but here the benefit of being dedicated to Jehovah (of which dedication these rites were the sacrament and seal) is evident and unquestionable. One may (as they give the reason) 'privilege a person, though he be incapable of knowing it; but one ought not to disprivilege a person without his knowledge.'" (Wall, Vol. 1, page 7.)

In other words, a father may by will leave his infant child any sum in his possession at the time of his death; that is, privilege him in any sum; and none will deny his right: but in all justice he may not disinherit, *disprivilege* the child; for against that the judgment of mankind rebels.

So in religion. If there be an infinitely just and good God, as we are taught to believe, who has entered into a covenant of mercy with mankind, then it is allowable for me to do anything consistent with reason and revelation to bring my child into the benefits of that covenant. This all must allow.

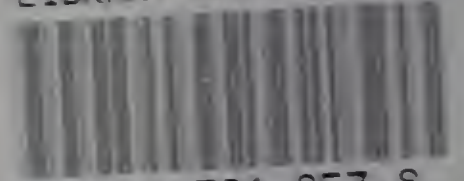
Suppose, then, the dedication of my child to God in holy baptism should prove a means of grace to him; that, when he grows up to riper years and can choose for himself, the knowledge that I had dedicated him to God in infancy should appeal to him in such a way as to influence him to make his own the

choice I had made for him when he could not make it himself; then clearly I have privileged my child, though he is incapable of knowing and appreciating it now. But suppose from "scruples" of one sort or another I put the matter off "until he knows what he is doing," "is old enough to choose for himself," and when that time comes he should feel that no man, not even his father, cared for his soul and turn from God to a life of sin and shame; then I have disprivileged my child without his knowledge, have been careless with respect to his soul and guilty of the grossest impiety.

Or if it should chance to be that "these paradises are all nonsense, and God a monstrous fable"; that what the prophets have told, sages believed, and poets sung, this religion of ours is a fiction and our hope of immortality but the imaginings of fevered brains; then I have done him no wrong, since I have committed him to nothing he cannot renounce when he shall have reached the years of choice.

"If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve: . . . but as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

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